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Contact: Anne Enright Shepherd  
(301) 975-4858

NIST STANDARD TO IMPROVE  
ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT  
INFORMATION

The Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology announced today the approval of a federal information processing standard that will help make data on computer systems in many government agencies more readily available to the public.

The Application Profile for the Government Information Locator Service was approved as Federal Information Processing Standard 192 to create a uniform technical approach to providing information locator services to the public.

The standard is critical in implementing the Government Information Locator Service, or GILS, a decentralized collection of computer servers and associated information services that will be used by the public, either directly or through intermediaries, to find public information throughout the federal government. Other major steps toward creating GILS announced today by the Clinton Administration include an Office of Management and Budget Bulletin that sets out implementation goals and timetables for federal agencies.

The application profile for GILS addresses some of the interactions between computer systems, enabling users of client software to interconnect with GILS-compliant servers containing accessible public information. The profile is expected to be implemented in commercial off-the-shelf products that will expand choices for federal agencies and improve information retrieval for users.

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This application profile is based primarily on a voluntary industry standard, the American National Standard for Information Retrieval, Application Service Definition and Protocol Specification for Open Systems Interconnection (ANSI/NISO Z39.50), developed by the National Information Standards Organization. A group of industry and government experts led by the Department of the Interior's U.S. Geological Survey adapted the technology for use in government systems.

As a non-regulatory agency of the Commerce Department's Technology Administration, NIST promotes U.S. economic growth by working with industry to develop and apply technology, measurements and standards.

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**Note to Editors:** For further technical information, contact Eliot Christian, U.S. Geological Survey, (703) 648-7245, fax: (703) 648-7069, e-mail: [echristi@usgs.gov](mailto:echristi@usgs.gov).